

Application Serial No.: 10/679,412
Reply to Office Action dated April 11, 2007

IN THE DRAWINGS

The attached Replacement Sheets of drawings include changes to FIGS. 18 and 25-27. More specifically, FIGS. 18 and 27 have been amended to change “Brake-in” to “Unscheduled,” and FIGS. 25 and 26 have been amended to change “Boad” to “Board” to correct a typographical error. These Replacement Sheets, which include FIGS. 17, 18, and 25-27, replace the original sheets including FIGS. 17, 18, and 25-27.

Attachment: Replacement Sheets

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application as presently amended and in light of the following discussion is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-16, 25, and 28-30 are presently active in this case, Claims 7, 14, and 15 having been amended, and Claim 30 having been added by way of the present Amendment. Care has been taken such that no new matter has been entered. (See, e.g., page 5, lines 16-17, page 53, last two lines, as well as page 36, line 18, through page 37, line 18 and Figure 4.)

Pending Claims 6, 7, and 10-16 have been withdrawn from consideration as being directed to non-elected species; however, these claims remain pending since they depend from linking claims. Newly added Claim 30 reads on the elected species.

The specification, claims, and drawings have also been amended to correct minor informalities. For example, the specification and FIGS. 18 and 27 have been amended to change the term "brake-in" to the more grammatically appropriate term "unscheduled," the specification has been amended to correct minor inconsistencies noted during a review thereof, and FIGS. 25 and 26 have been amended to change "Boad" to "Board" in steps 113, 114, 125, and 126 to correct a typographical error. No new matter has been entered.

The Applicants respectfully request entry of the amendments set forth herein as the application is believed to be in condition for allowance.

In the outstanding Official Action, Claim 28 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, and under 35 U.S.C. 101. Claim 28 has been amended to recite "wherein boards of various kinds are loaded and fed to the board transfer devices in a random order," which is

clearly enabled by the disclosure in the specification, for example, on page 39, in the first full paragraph. Accordingly, the Applicants respectfully request the withdrawal of the rejections of Claim 28 under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, and 35 U.S.C. 101.

Claims 1-5, 8, 9, 25, and 29 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Cho et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,944,943). For the reasons discussed below, the Applicants request the withdrawal of the anticipation rejection.

The Cho et al. reference does not qualify as prior art under 35 U.S.C. §102(a) and (b), since the application publication and patent publication were both after the U.S. filing date of the present application. Thus, the Cho et al. reference is currently being cited as prior art under 35 U.S.C. §102(e). The Cho et al. reference has a U.S. filing date of June 12, 2003. The present application claims foreign priority to JAPAN 2002-293839, which was filed on October 7, 2002. The Applicants have submitted concurrently herewith an English language translation of the foreign priority document for the present application, namely JAPAN 2002-293839, thereby perfecting foreign priority. Since the foreign priority date of the present application is prior to the U.S. filing date of the Cho et al. reference and since foreign priority has been perfected, the present application antedates the Cho et al. reference thereby removing the Cho et al. reference as prior art under 35 U.S.C. §102(e). (See, e.g. MPEP §706.02(b).)

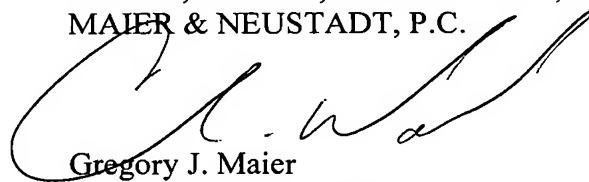
Accordingly, the anticipation rejection based on the Cho et al. reference has been rendered moot. Thus, the Applicants respectfully request the withdrawal of the anticipation rejection and allowance of the application.

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Consequently, in view of the above discussion, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is in condition for formal allowance and an early and favorable reconsideration of this application is therefore requested.

Respectfully Submitted,

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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G. Maier', is written over the printed name of Gregory J. Maier.

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FIG. 17

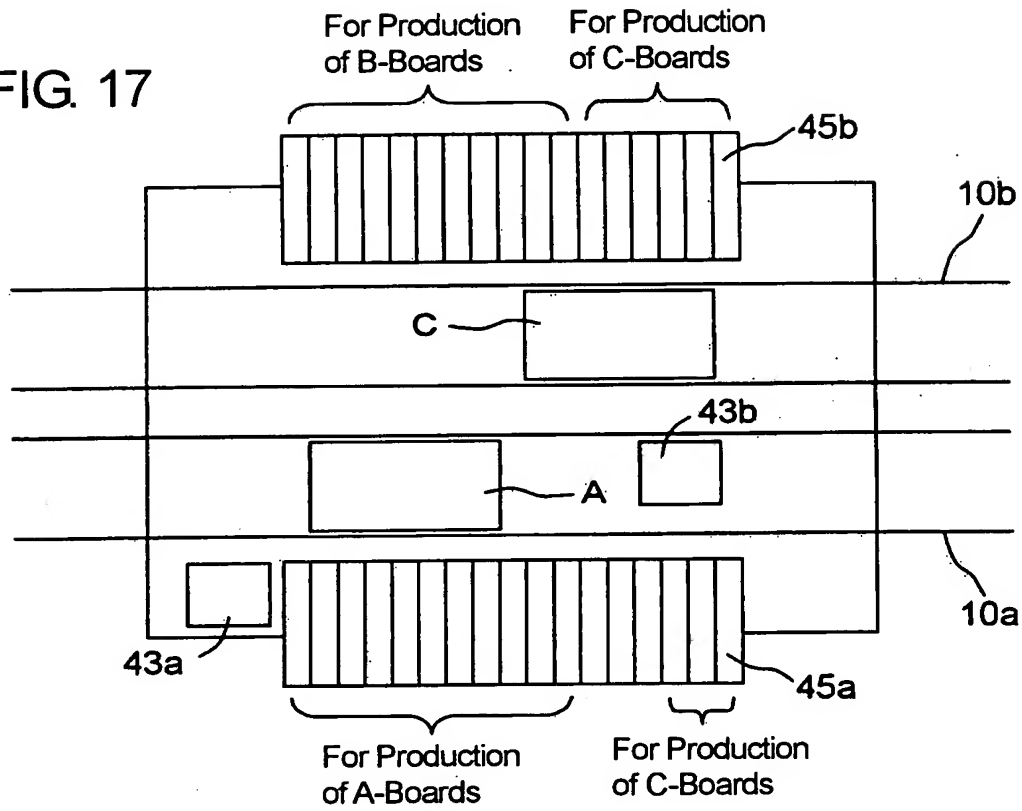


FIG. 18

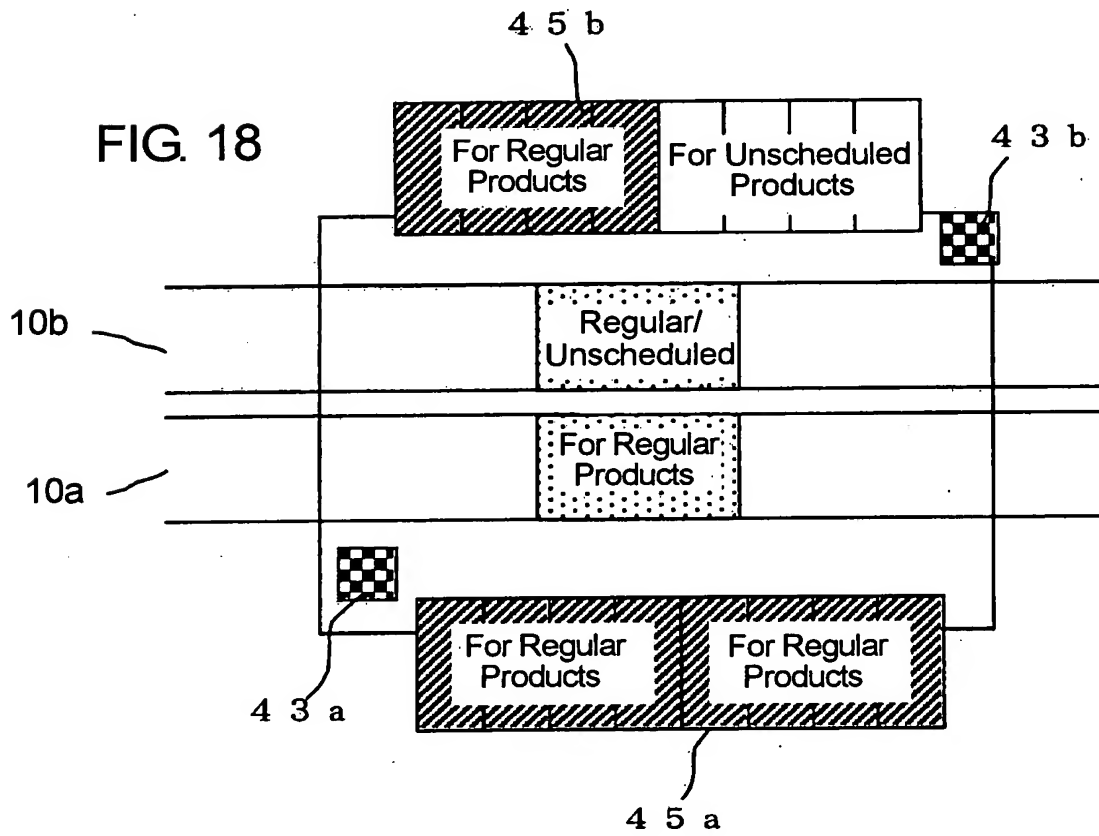


FIG. 25

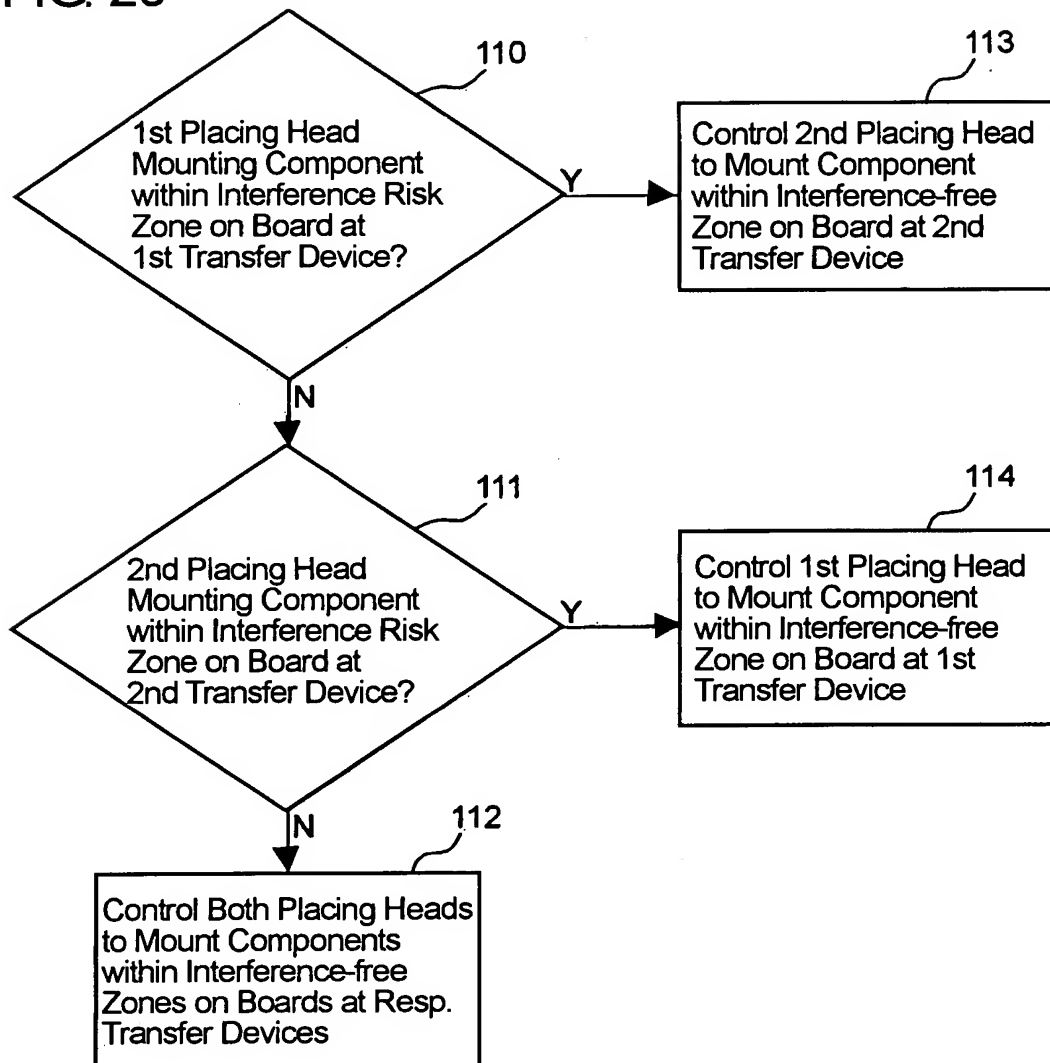


FIG. 26

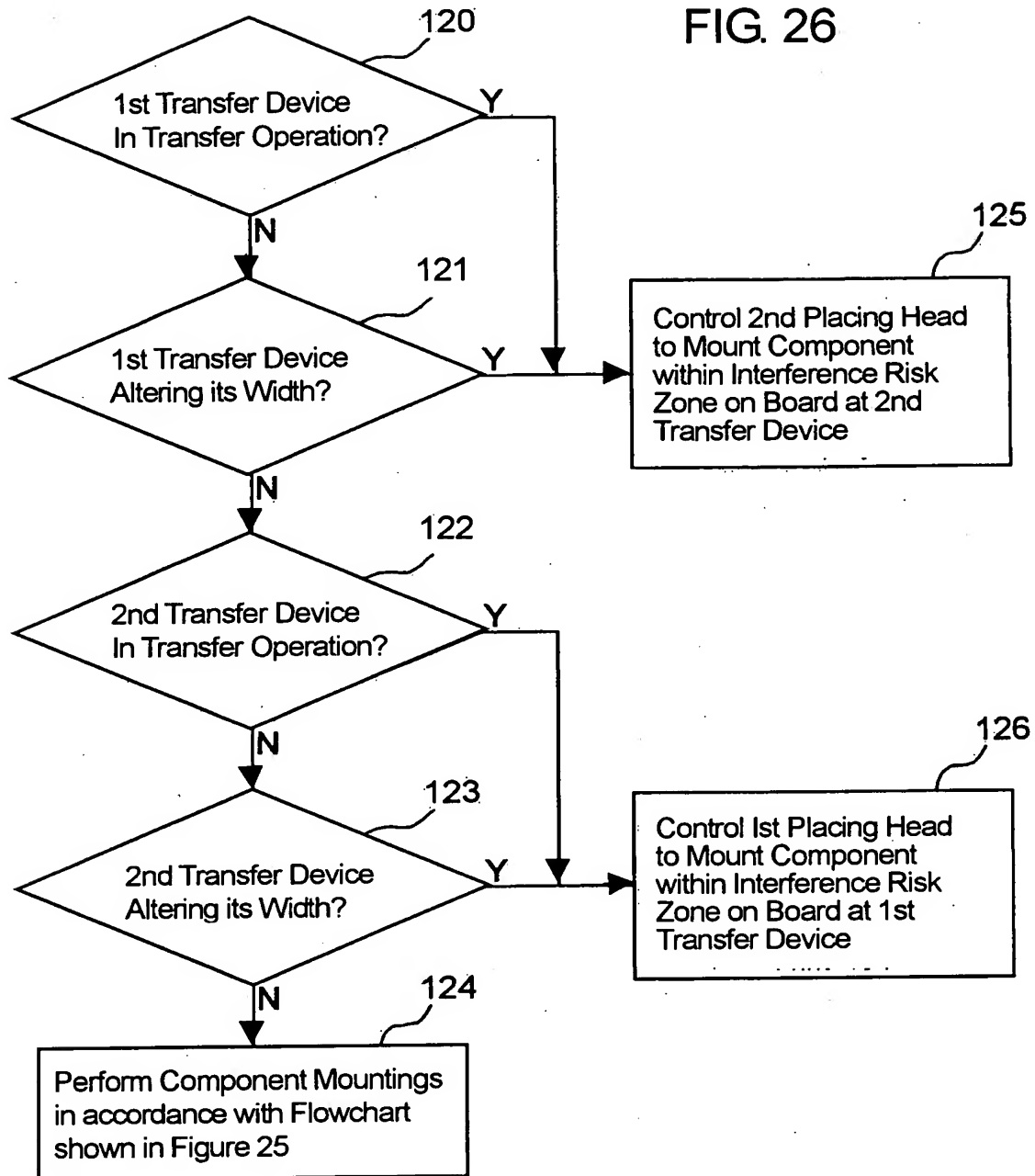


FIG. 27

